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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON D C 20548

RELEASED

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DEC 23 1969

Dear Mr. Long:

In your letter dated November 26, 1969, you requested that we comment on matters brought to your attention in a letter dated November 21, 1969, which you received from Colonel Albert K. Tank, President, Aberdeen Proving Ground Flying Club. Colonel Tank's letter and the attachments refer, in substance, to legislation pending on aviation user charges and to certain regulations proposed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regarding airport traffic control which, he indicated, would be discriminatory against general aviation traffic at major commercial airports.

The proposed legislation presently under consideration by the Congress regarding user charges provides for the application of revenues derived from these charges to the modernization and expansion of the airport and airway system. It is the intent of this legislation that those who benefit most from the proposed improvements to the airport and airway system should bear the cost of such improvements. The user charges provided for in the proposed legislation apply to commercial air carriers as well as to general aviation, both of which will benefit from improvements made to the airport and airway system with revenues derived from the proposed user charges.

The proposed regulations relative to airport traffic control are intended to segregate aircraft within airspace designated as "terminal control areas" through the adoption of air traffic rules that would govern the operation of aircraft within these areas. While the proposed regulations would impose operating and equipment requirements that might be difficult for some elements of general aviation to meet, the regulations would not prohibit any segment of aviation, with the possible exception of that involving student pilots, from operating within the designated terminal control areas.

The regulations proposed by FAA relative to airport traffic control systems will be the subject of public hearings scheduled to be held during December 1969 and January 1970 in 22 cities where traffic at major air terminals would be affected by the implementation of FAA's proposed regulations. These hearings

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are being conducted by FAA in accordance with its responsibilities under the administrative procedure in 5 U.S.C. 553 (Supp. IV) and are intended to ensure that all affected public interests may be properly considered before any proposed ruling is adopted.

Accordingly, Colonel Tank may wish to express his views to the FAA for its consideration during the planned hearings that are scheduled to be conducted in Washington on January 15, 1970. Information relative to the planned hearings may be obtained from the Office of the Director of the Air Traffic Service, Federal Aviation Administration, in Washington, D.C.

We trust that this information will serve your purpose.

Sincerely yours,

  
Assistant Comptroller General  
of the United States

The Honorable Clarence D. Long  
House of Representatives